

Aaron Vinson
October 2, 2015

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION

TRACEY WHITE, et al.,)	
)	
Plaintiffs,)	
)	
vs.)	Cause No. 14-cv-01490-HEA
)	
THOMAS JACKSON, et al.,)	
)	
Defendants.)	

DEPOSITION OF AARON VINSON

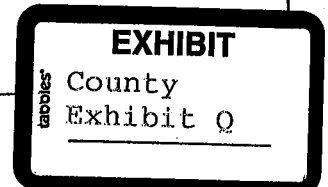
Taken on behalf of the Plaintiffs

October 2, 2015

Reported by: Christine A. LePage, CCR #1000

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1 -oOo-

2 AARON VINSON,

3 of lawful age, having been first duly sworn to testify the
4 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, deposes
5 and says on behalf of the Plaintiffs as follows:

6 DIRECT EXAMINATION

7 QUESTIONS BY MR. LATTIMER:

8 Q Can you state your full name, please?

9 A Aaron Vinson.

10 Q And how are you employed?

11 A I'm employed by St. Louis County police
12 department.

13 Q And what is your position?

14 A Right now I'm assigned to the Bureau of Drug
15 Enforcement as a detective.

16 Q Detective Vinson, you were here before, I'm
17 going to tell you just like I told Detective Jackson, if
18 you need to take a break, don't worry about the reason,
19 just say you need to take a break and we'll take a break.
20 If you need to speak to your lawyer, don't worry about the
21 reason, just say so and you can speak to your lawyer. If
22 you don't understand my question, please let me know so
23 that I can try and clarify it so you understand.

24 And the only other thing, if I interrupt you,
25 let me know that, I'm not doing it intentionally, I will

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1 A Yes, I did.

2 Q When and where?

3 A Do you want me to just give you the degrees or
4 the years that I was there?

5 Q Not the year -- What I'd like to know is the
6 year you graduated and the degree, if you got it.

7 A Okay. 2006 I graduated with an associate's
8 degree from North Central Missouri College of Trenton,
9 Missouri, and 2008 I graduated with a bachelor's degree
10 from Central Methodist University, and in 2015 I graduated
11 from Lindenwood University with a master's in criminal
12 justice.

13 Q And what was the undergrad degree in?

14 A Criminal justice. Well, just to further -- it
15 was criminal justice administration is what I have the
16 master's degree in.

17 Q Okay. And were all those institutions in
18 Missouri?

19 A Yes, they are.

20 Q Okay. Let's go to August 13, 2014. I take it
21 you worked for St. Louis County at the time?

22 A Correct.

23 Q And you were assigned -- What was your
24 assignment?

25 A I was with the other members of the street

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1 enforcement team assigned to -- I guess technically
2 assigned to the command post, and they dispersed us as
3 they saw fit or dispatched us to areas that they saw
4 needed reinforcements.

5 **Q Okay. How were you dressed on the 13th of**
6 **August, 2014?**

7 A I was dressed in our standard uniform for the
8 Bureau of Drug Enforcement, which was blue jeans, also had
9 on my department issued vest which was marked "Police"
10 front and back, and also a badge hanging around my neck.

11 **Q All right. Did you have any weapon with you?**

12 A Yes, I had my full duty belt with me, which
13 includes service revolver, TASER, extra magazines, and
14 handcuffs.

15 **Q Do you carry a TASER?**

16 A Yes, I do.

17 **Q TASER certified?**

18 A Yes, I am.

19 **Q Did you carry an ASP?**

20 A Yeah, I had my ASP with me at that time.

21 **Q ASP certified?**

22 A Yes.

23 **Q All right. How many people were in your unit?**

24 A There was six detectives and a sergeant.

25 **Q Who was the sergeant?**

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1 his hands, a knife or a gun. However, it's important to
2 note that his fists were clenched, so, I mean --

3 **Q At all times? The whole time you saw him?**

4 A I can't testify to when they exactly clenched,
5 but I know when he ran towards officers he clenched his
6 fists.

7 **Q When he ran towards officers he clenched his**
8 **fists?**

9 A Correct.

10 **Q And that suggested to you what again?**

11 A It suggested that -- it appeared that an assault
12 on officers could have been possibly going through his
13 head, and that's --

14 **Q So why wasn't he charged with assault on police?**

15 A He didn't assault the police. The charge that
16 we had probable cause to believe was the refusal to
17 disperse; however, an assault -- we stopped the assault
18 before it occurred.

19 **Q And so -- And as I understand it again, the**
20 **refusal to disperse was because he was told to disperse**
21 **and he left the crowd and came towards you alone, right?**

22 A Can you restate the --

23 **Q He was in a crowd, according to you, he left the**
24 **crowd, according to you, walked towards the officers or**
25 **ran towards the officers alone, according to you, and that**

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1 **Q (by Mr. Lattimer) Where were you when you first**
2 **observed Mr. Matthews?**

3 A I was part of the skirmish line on the -- the
4 best directions I can give, the eastern side of the
5 skirmish line, which would be the southbound lanes of
6 traffic.

7 **Q Okay. And where was Detective Jackson?**

8 A In the general area, I can't say.

9 **Q Where was Detective Patterson?**

10 A All the detectives I listed earlier were in the
11 general area.

12 **Q So what, if anything, did you see Detective**
13 **Patterson do?**

14 A At which point would you like me to --

15 **Q When you saw Mr. Matthews.**

16 A Detective Patterson lifted his mask and he
17 said -- he told him he couldn't come through there, you
18 need to go somewhere else, and that's not a direct quote,
19 that's just --

20 **Q Okay. So you were close enough to Detective**
21 **Patterson to see that and hear that?**

22 A Correct.

23 **Q And then so Detective Patterson told him he had**
24 **to go in another direction?**

25 A Several people told him that, and Detective

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1 Patterson's the only one I recall lifting his mask;
2 however, it's important to note that the LRAD was also
3 going, which is the acoustic device.

4 Q Okay. But you say the direction he was going in
5 had nothing to do with his arrest, correct?

6 A I mean, the specific of that question is --
7 you're going to have to rephrase that.

8 Q Well, you just said when I asked you about his
9 direction, that the direction that he was going in had
10 nothing to do with his arrest.

11 MR. HUGHES: That's not exactly --

12 MR. LATTIMER: That's exactly what he said.

13 MR. HUGHES: In response to your question, he
14 also said right before that in the narrowness of your
15 question. Put it in context, his response before that.

16 Q (by Mr. Lattimer) So is that -- It had nothing
17 to do with his arrest, but Detective Patterson removes his
18 mask to tell him to go in another direction, right?

19 A I don't know exactly the quote that Detective
20 Patterson said.

21 Q Well, something to that effect, right?

22 A The crowd was well aware that they needed to
23 disperse and it was an unlawful assembly.

24 Q But he didn't say anything about disperse,
25 right?

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1 with a lethal shotgun. We shot him with a less-lethal
2 bean bag.

3 Q Well, we all know he was shot with a nonlethal
4 weapon. Mr. Matthews has testified that he was shot with
5 a nonlethal weapon, Detective Jackson has testified that
6 he shot him with a nonlethal round, and the hospital
7 records support the fact that he was not shot with
8 anything other than a nonlethal round. So I'm not
9 suggesting to you that Detective Jackson shot him with
10 anything other than a nonlethal round, okay?

11 A I understand that, but for clarity, throughout
12 my testimony, we're going to clarify that it was
13 less-lethal rounds.

14 Q It was, admitted, stipulated. That's what I'm
15 saying. I'm not trying to suggest or say that it was
16 different, we agree. That's one thing you and I agree on,
17 it was a nonlethal weapon, I mean, round that he was shot
18 with, okay? That's not an argument.

19 A Okay.

20 Q Okay?

21 A Got you.

22 Q All right. So after he was shot, nonlethal, is
23 when you encountered him in the ravine, correct?

24 A Correct, it was after.

25 Q All right. And so who was with you at that

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1 point?

2 A I mean, as I got to Mr. Matthews or --

3 Q Yeah. Yeah.

4 A It was initially me first, then followed by
5 Detective Bates, Detective Patterson, Detective Burns.
6 Sergeant Wathen was present; however, I don't think he
7 engaged in any part of the actual physical contact with
8 Dwayne Matthews.

9 Q Okay. And so what happened then?

10 A At which point?

11 Q When you got into the ravine and as you say
12 contacted Mr. Matthews along with Detective Bates,
13 Patterson, and Burns.

14 A Do you mind if we back up just a split second
15 from that?

16 Q You can go wherever you want to with the
17 question.

18 A Okay. After he made his way into the ravine,
19 I'm not -- I mean, the way he got there is -- he was
20 stumbling, he appeared to jump, after he was in the
21 ravine, I went to the edge of the ravine, I was the first
22 one up there, and I told him to grab my hand, he continued
23 to thrash and moved away from me, at which time I entered
24 the ravine and grabbed him.

25 Q How did you grab him?

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1 A I wrapped my hand up in his -- he had like a
2 basketball jersey, and I pulled him to the side of the
3 ravine with the assistance of Detective Bates, who grabbed
4 my hand, as soon as I got to the side of the ravine
5 Detective Bates assisted me and he grabbed him, too, and
6 we got him out of the water.

7 **Q Okay. And then what happened?**

8 A The ravine's kind of down, downhill, and we
9 got -- we tried to get him up to a flat surface as to keep
10 him from falling or us from falling back into the ravine.
11 He was on the sidewalk, he continued to thrash, thrash
12 about his body, we were telling him quit resisting, quit
13 resisting, you're under arrest, quit resisting, he
14 continued to thrash, his arms were thrashing about, his
15 legs were thrashing about, his elbows were flying, at that
16 time Detective Patterson administered the department-
17 issued OC spray, and we gained full compliance at that
18 point and I put handcuffs on him.

19 **Q So he was sprayed with OC spray?**

20 A Correct.

21 **Q Okay. So there's you, Bates, and Patterson,**
22 **four men, right?**

23 A What's the --

24 **Q I'm just asking, these are men, none of these**
25 **are women, right?**

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1 A Yes.

2 Q Okay. So these are four men?

3 A Yes.

4 Q And those men are you, Bates, Patterson, and
5 Burns, correct?

6 A Yes.

7 Q And you all have Mr. Matthews' -- you had, what,
8 a left arm? right arm? What part?

9 A I didn't have any part initially.

10 Q So when you all pulled him out of the ravine,
11 you didn't have any part of him?

12 MR. HUGHES: I'm not sure I understand the
13 question, but object to the form. But you can answer, if
14 you can.

15 Q (by Mr. Lattimer) How did he get to the flat
16 surface?

17 A What do you mean have any part?

18 Q How did he get to the flat surface?

19 A As I stated, to get him out of the water I
20 wrapped my hand up in his shirt.

21 Q Okay. So you had him by yourself at that point?

22 A Just until we got to the edge of the -- till I
23 got him to the edge of the ravine.

24 Q All right. And when you got to the edge of the
25 ravine, was that the flat surface?

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1 A No.

2 Q Where was the flat surface located?

3 A A little bit to the east of where we were.

4 Q And up the ravine, right?

5 A A little bit, yes, up.

6 Q All right. So how did he get from there to the
7 flat surface?

8 A Detective Bates assisted me.

9 Q All right. So Detective Bates had what part of
10 his body?

11 A I'm unsure, you'll have to ask Detective Bates.

12 Q Well, what part of his body did you have?

13 A I had him by his basketball jersey, wrapped up
14 in my hand.

15 Q And that was what, his chest? his abdomen?
16 Where?

17 A The basketball jersey is on the upper torso.

18 Q There are basketball jerseys from the waist to
19 the neck, right?

20 A Yes.

21 Q And so I'm asking you, what part? Did you have
22 your arm wrapped around the entire torso, upper torso, did
23 you have it around his abdomen, did you have it around his
24 chest, did you have it on an arm? What part of his body
25 did you have?

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1 where he grabbed him.

2 Q I understand that part. But I just want to go
3 back, counsel is saying that you didn't ever say that --
4 didn't even say that he grabbed the man, and did I -- Is
5 it me? Am I missing something here?

6 A Correct, I didn't say he grabbed the man, I said
7 he assisted me in helping get him out of the water.

8 Q So how did he do that if he didn't grab the man?

9 A You'll have to ask Detective Bates.

10 Q You're the one who said he assisted you, I'm
11 asking you how he assisted you if he didn't grab the man.

12 MR. HUGHES: He answered your question.

13 MR. LATTIMER: I missed it, maybe it went over
14 my head, I only have a slight education.

15 MR. HUGHES: So he did not say that Bates
16 grabbed in any part, he did say that Bates assisted.

17 MR. LATTIMER: And he's going to have to explain
18 that one to me, because that one has me completely
19 dumbfounded.

20 Q (by Mr. Lattimer) So let's go through it.
21 You're telling me that Bates assisted you move the man
22 from the ravine to the flat surface; do I have that part
23 right? Just answer that, please. Because I want to go
24 step by step.

25 A Correct.

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1 man or anybody else; is that what you're saying?

2 MR. HUGHES: Objection, argumentative.

3 A I'm saying I'm trying to give you the events as
4 I recall specifically.

5 Q (by Mr. Lattimer) I understand that, and I'm
6 asking you a specific question. When's the last time you
7 viewed this video?

8 A Thirty minutes ago.

9 Q So 30 minutes ago you reviewed this video, and
10 this video does show this man being brought to the flat
11 surface; isn't that right?

12 A Correct.

13 Q And it does show the involved officers, doesn't
14 it?

15 A I believe it shows the officers more than it
16 does the actual event.

17 Q Okay. And so it is your testimony right now
18 that you have no recollection of what parts of this man's
19 body Bates or anybody else had even though you reviewed
20 the video 30 minutes ago; is that right?

21 MR. HUGHES: Excuse me, object to the form of
22 the question, I think you're misstating what was on the
23 video. Maybe I don't understand your question. I think
24 he just said -- or he agreed with your earlier statement
25 that this was on the flat surface, and your question seems

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1 of -- where you want me to testify to which --

2 Q Any part.

3 A The video picks up after he is out of the
4 ravine --

5 Q I got that.

6 A -- and when we were attempting to handcuff him.

7 Q I got that.

8 A Are you asking what part --

9 MR. HUGHES: So do you understand? You know, if
10 you're asking him --

11 MR. LATTIMER: I'm not having a problem with
12 understanding, I know what's on the video.

13 MR. HUGHES: If you're asking him to base it on
14 the video, the video is at the flat surface after he's
15 been pulled out of the ravine.

16 MR. LATTIMER: Let me ask you: What part of an
17 objection was any of that you just said?

18 MR. HUGHES: Did you understand what he just
19 said to you?

20 MR. LATTIMER: What part of an objection was any
21 of that which you just said?

22 MR. HUGHES: I guess you're not going to answer
23 the question.

24 MR. LATTIMER: No. When do I answer questions
25 in a deposition? That ain't my role. But you just talk

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1 **about you. What part of the body did you grab?**

2 A At which point?

3 **Q At any point.**

4 A As I stated, the first contact I had with him
5 after he wouldn't grab my hand and he moved away from me
6 in the ravine, I wrapped my hand up in his shirt, in his
7 basketball jersey, right around the mid section, and
8 that's the first contact I had with Detectives Bates, I
9 remember him grabbing my arm to help me get Matthews to
10 the side. Once Matthews was placed on the flatter
11 surface, he continued to thrash about the ground, his
12 elbows were flying, at one point his arms were under him,
13 they were out from under him, we were just trying to
14 handcuff him, he was advised the whole time he was under
15 arrest, he needed to quit resisting.

16 He refused to do that, so he was administered a
17 burst of pepper spray from Detective Patterson, at which
18 time we gained full compliance and he was -- I placed him
19 in handcuffs. There was no part of me that I specifically
20 remember grabbing him except for when I went into the
21 ravine and I wrapped my hand up in his shirt.

22 **Q So how do you handcuff somebody if you don't**
23 **grab them?**

24 A You place their hands behind their back and
25 they're placed in handcuffs.

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1 Q Do you not have to grab the arm or the hand?

2 A Yeah, I'm sure.

3 Q So you did grab something at some point, right?

4 A At some point he was placed in handcuffs.

5 Q Okay. You did grab some part of his body at
6 some point, right?

7 A Like I said before, I grabbed him by the jersey
8 for sure.

9 Q You keep going back to a jersey and I'm asking
10 you about his body. You just told me you didn't grab any
11 part of his body, and then I asked you how do you handcuff
12 somebody if you don't grab some part of their body, and
13 then I think you said to handcuff him. And so what I'm
14 asking you is you did grab some parts of his body, didn't
15 you?

16 A I already stated I grabbed his jersey, that's
17 the first part that I grabbed.

18 Q Forget the first part, now we're moved on. What
19 parts of his body, not his jersey, what parts of his body,
20 body, arm, hand, leg, neck, head, what part of his body
21 did you grab at any point?

22 A After he was administered the OC spray he became
23 compliant, at which time I would have grabbed his hands to
24 handcuff him behind his back.

25 Q So you only grabbed his hands?

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1 A Hands, wrists.

2 Q His hands or his wrists, those are the only two
3 parts of his body that you grabbed, correct?

4 A Incorrect. As I stated earlier, I grabbed his
5 jersey.

6 Q Jersey is not a part of a body.

7 MR. HUGHES: He means at that point, you know,
8 on the flat surface.

9 Q (by Mr. Lattimer) I've given you a definition
10 of body, hands, arms, neck, head, stomach, back, chest,
11 leg. That's a body. A jersey is clothing. So now that
12 you understand the definition of that, what part of his
13 body did you grab?

14 MR. HUGHES: Objection's repetitive, he answered
15 that a little while ago. But go ahead and answer.

16 A Thank you for the definition of body, first of
17 all. Second, it would have been his wrists and his hands.

18 Q (by Mr. Lattimer) Nothing else?

19 A No.

20 Q Okay. Did you punch him?

21 A I did not punch him.

22 Q Did you kick him?

23 A I did not kick him.

24 Q Did you knee him?

25 A I did not knee him.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI
EASTERN DIVISION

ORIGINAL

TRACEY WHITE, et al.,)	
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Plaintiffs,)	
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vs.)	Cause No. 14-cv-01490-HEA
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DEPOSITION OF CHRISTOPHER SHEARER

Taken on behalf of the Defendants
McCOY, McCANN, HILL, BELMAR, and ST. LOUIS COUNTY

March 10, 2016

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